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ART. X.—CRITICAL NOTICES.

- 1.—*The Writings of Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage.* Translated by REV. ROBERT ERNEST WALLIS, Ph. D., Senior Priest Vicar of Wells Cathedral, and Incumbent of Christ Church, Coxley, Somerset. Vol. I. Containing the Epistles and some of the Treatises. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 1868. 8vo. pp. xxxi., 468.

SOME thirty years ago, in the height of the Tractarian controversy, the experiment was tried of translating afresh the Fathers of the Christian Church. It was supposed that the revival of ecclesiasticism would be justified by the testimony of these leaders of ancient thought and practice, and that the Oxford divines would find their prototypes in the Clements and Basils and Gregories and Cyrils of the Greek and Roman Churches. The translations were well done, and numerous volumes were issued, handsome, of convenient size, with ample margins for annotation, and with abundant notes of explanation. But the experiment was pecuniarily a failure. The volumes would not sell. The words of the living men, Newman, Pusey, Manning, and the rest, were more interesting than the words of the mighty dead; and the Oxford "Library of the Fathers" was quietly consigned to a resting-place on the back shelves of booksellers' shops and clergymen's libraries.

The experiment is now again tried in another place and under "other auspices." The Messrs. Clark of Edinburgh, the eminent purveyors of the evangelical theology of Germany, have ventured to follow up their editions of Stier and Tholuck and Hengstenberg and Dorner by a series of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. The failure of the Anglo-Catholic enterprise only encourages the Calvinist publishers to try the experiment again. Their volumes are heavier, and a cheerful blue has given place to a sober brown, with red-edged leaves; but the translations are as well done, and there is a certain grave sincerity and respect in the style of the homely pages. We seem to be in a Scotch conventicle, as we follow these italicized "arguments," with their orderly sections.

The writings of Cyprian, just issued, constitute the eighth volume in the general series. Of all the Fathers, Cyprian is the least Presbyterian. His significance in history is as the defender and expounder of Episcopacy and the rights of bishops. The sin of schism, in his view, is as bad as the sin of heresy, and indeed is the natural and inevitable cause of heresy. His quarrel all along was with the irregular men, who would do eccentric things, who would forget their ordination vows, who

would go in by-paths and forbidden ways, who would consort with heretics, and recognize Christians outside of the ecclesiastical pale. He was vexed continually by the zealots and the pietists, who were so careless of canons, and believed that they had a right to preach God's word in their own way. With a slight change of names and phrases, we seem to be reading in these letters of the Bishop of Carthage late "pastoral addresses" of English and American bishops. In the twenty-seventh epistle Cyprian "praises his clergy for having rejected from communion Gaius of Didda, a presbyter, and his deacon, who rashly communicated with the lapsed; and exhorts them to do the same with certain others." Gaius of Didda was one of those blind fanatics who would consort with dissenters, and "offer their oblations," and "be taken in their wicked errors," in spite of the frequent and affectionate warnings of his spiritual head. How strangely like an editorial in some of our Church papers sounds this paragraph from Cyprian's fortieth epistle! "And lest their raging boldness should ever cease, they are striving here also to distract the members of Christ into schismatical parties, and to cut and tear the one body of the Catholic Church, so that, running about from door to door through the houses of many, or from city to city through certain districts, they seek for companions in their obstinacy and error to join to themselves in their schism. To whom we have once given this reply, nor shall we cease to command them to lay aside their pernicious discussions and disputes, and to be aware that it is an impiety to forsake their Mother." Do we not know who are "the dispersed and wandering sheep which the wilful faction and heretical temptation of some is separating from their Mother?" It is pleasant, too, to have the authority of this bishop of the third century for the divorce of religion from politics. The example of the tribe of Levi seems to show him that "clerics ought not to mix themselves up in secular cares." They ought to attend to their own business as priests at the altar, and keep themselves unspotted from the world. In fact, there is hardly a question in dispute to-day about the position and rights and duties of priests and bishops, that is not anticipated in the writings of the African priest and prelate, Tertullian and Cyprian. We may fear, nevertheless, that their authority will not settle the questions now any more than it did in their own day. The ecclesiastical controversies of our time gain no dignity, when we find that they only repeat the wranglings of an ignorant people on the African shore,—that we have only Gaius and Novatian and the Montanists and the Donatists over again.

Hardly less than by the plague of schism and heresy was the pious soul of Cyprian exercised by the immodest raiment of the virgins of his

time, the sisters of the Church. Such ornaments as they persisted in wearing were a scandal to the Gospel. He is vexed by the same spectacle of many-colored robes and costly jewels which are brought to the altars by the virgins of to-day. In what fashionable church could his treatise on the Dress of Virgins now be read without amazing the hearers by its assurance? Cyprian is especially severe on the practice of coloring the hair, — “what is true changed into a lie by the deceitful dyes of medicaments.” His argument is edifying: “Your Lord says, ‘Thou canst not make one hair white or black’; and you, in order to overcome the word of your Lord, will be more mighty than He, and stain your hair with a daring endeavor and profane contempt; with evil presage of the future, make a beginning to yourself already of flame-colored hair; and sin (oh, wickedness!) with your head, that is, with the nobler part of your body. And although it is written of the Lord, ‘His head and his hair were like wool or snow,’ you curse that whiteness and hate that hoariness which is like to the Lord’s head.” It is a skilful touch, that the golden dye is a premonition of hell-fire.

Cyprian’s style of argument and his use of Scripture are puerile in the extreme. If no other good could come from the republication of these works of the ancient Christian ages, this exhibition of weak logic would comfort those who imagine that the Church has degenerated. The absurdities and trivialities of Pastoral Letters and Charges now are fairly matched by what the “Fathers” sent forth as Law and Gospel for the Church of their time. The Primate of Canterbury cannot make a more inconsequent or pitiful plea, more full of empty threatening and strange perversion of the Scriptures, in his protest against Colenso, than the Primate of Carthage in his protest against Novatian. The candid study of the Fathers will not show that the intellect of the Church was finer in the early ages than in our own time.

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2. — *Essays on the Progress of Nations in Civilization, Productive Industry, Wealth, and Population.* Illustrated by Statistics of Mining, Agriculture, Manufactures, Commerce, Banking, Internal Improvements, Emigration, and Population. By EZRA C. SEAMAN. Second Series. New York: Charles Scribner & Co. 1868. 12mo. pp. 659.

THE title of this work accurately describes it, and understates, rather than overstates, its extraordinary fulness of detail and information. We must admire the rare patience and industry which were employed in gathering, sorting, and adjusting this mass of facts about nations, an-